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STABILITY OF SAUDI ARABIA

-- Saudi Arabia has been one of our most stable friends. Saudi society has demonstrated a high degree of adaptability while undergoing rapid economic and social changes. The Saudi leadership remains in close contact with its people and has sought to carry forward national development while maintaining and strengthening its commitment to the Islamic values of the society.

-- There has been some dissatisfaction among the small Shi'a religious minority, but the Saudi Government has effectively responded to this group and reduced tensions. Demonstrations reflecting religious tensions in 1979 were not repeated in 1980.

-- We view the seizure of the Mecca Mosque by a very small group of religious fanatics as an aberation which does not affect our fundamental judgments regarding the prospects for stability in Saudi Arabia.

-- In the years ahead, however, Saudi Arabia is likely to be faced with continuing internal pressures to assure various elements of society a fair share and a meaningful role. Having made progress in evolving government institutions, Saudi Arabia faces the challenge of maintaining sensitive contact with its people and of developing institutions which will carry its traditional social harmony over into the modern era.